

**STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: November 17, 2004

**Agenda Item 9**

**TO:** LAFCO Commissioners

**FROM:** Everett Millais, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Sphere of Influence Review and Update: LAFCO 04-11S  
Ojai Valley Sanitary District

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Continue discussion and action on the update to the Ojai Valley Sanitary District sphere of influence to January 19, 2005.

**DISCUSSION:**

Staff has been working with the staff of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District and reviewing various sphere of influence update options with the District's Board for the last six months. Both LAFCO and the District staff thought that there would be some concurrence by the District about a proposed sphere of influence update in time for LAFCO to hold a hearing and consider action at the November 17 meeting. Because notice must be published 21 days prior to the LAFCO hearing date, a notice was published for possible LAFCO action on November 17. Thus, this matter has to appear on the Commission's agenda.

The District Board has not yet completed its review of the latest proposed sphere of influence update. Included in the various options reviewed has been an attempt by all parties to minimize the amount of CEQA review necessary for this update. It is important that the District Board and all interested individuals have adequate time to review, and hopefully agree upon, the update proposal that will become the project description for CEQA review. For this reason, staff has advised the District Board that it is preferable for everyone to take more time at this stage rather than to have controversy about the

**COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF**

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<b>EXECUTIVE OFFICER:</b> Everett Millais	<b>LAFCO ANALYST:</b> <i>Vacant</i>	<b>OFFICE MANAGER/CLERK:</b> Debbie Schubert	<b>LEGAL COUNSEL:</b> Leroy Smith

impacts and amount of CEQA review and analysis necessary at the LAFCO hearing. Thus, it is recommended that action on this matter by LAFCO be continued to January 19, 2005.

I have continued to advise the District Board that LAFCO is prepared to update spheres of influence based on the updates being considered exempt under CEQA or upon a determination that there are no significant environmental effects and no mitigation measures are necessary (a Negative Declaration). I advised the Board, however, that I would not undertake any other environmental work or specialized studies without further direction from the Commission due to staff time and budget constraints. Should such further environmental analysis be necessary before LAFCO could consider a sphere of influence update, I told the District Board I would recommend to the Commission that the District fund LAFCO's expenses for hiring consultants to prepare the extra environmental analysis. This is the same information I have been relaying to other districts as a part of the sphere of influence update process.

While this sphere of influence update is taking considerably longer than any of the other sphere of influence reviews to date, it is also by far the most complex. The existing sphere of influence of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District has little relationship to the District's boundaries or service area. The goal of the sphere of influence update is to correct these deficiencies as much as possible, but to also minimize the level of potential CEQA review and analysis in terms of time and expense for the District and LAFCO. To this end all parties are continuing to work cooperatively. It is just taking longer than originally expected.